

Amendments to the Claims:

1-12. (Cancelled)

13. (New) Binder for letterpress printing inks, comprising
a resin which is a modified condensation product of phenol and formaldehyde,
said modified condensation product having a molecular weight ranging from 300 to
10,000,000, with more than 24% of the product having a molecular weight above
1,000,000, and a melting point of at least 130°C, and
an absolutely aromatic-free solvent.

14. (New) Binder according to claim 13, wherein said resin is a
phenol-formaldehyde-modified rosin (colophonium) resin.

15. (New) Binder according to claim 13, wherein said solvent comprises a mineral oil
fulfilling the requirements of the US Federal Drug Administration (FDA), 21 CFR
178.3620(a).

16. (New) Binder according to claim 15, wherein said mineral oil is a white oil.

17. (New) Binder according to claim 13, wherein said solvent additionally comprises
a vegetable oil.

18. (New) Binder according to claim 13, wherein said solvent comprises a mixture of
mineral oil and vegetable oil in a ratio of 1:1 to 5: 1.

19. (New) Binder according to claim 13, wherein said solvent comprises a mixture of
mineral oil and vegetable oil in a ratio of 1: to 2: 1.

20. (New) Binder according to claim 13, wherein the ratio of said resin component to said solvent is from 1:1 to 1:2.
21. (New) Letterpress printing ink, comprising a binder according to claim 13.
22. (New) Letterpress printing ink according to claim 21, additionally comprising at least one colorant and optionally additives, wherein said colorants and additives are essentially non-toxic.
23. (New) Letterpress printing ink according to claim 22, wherein said colorants and additives are of food grade.
24. (New) Letterpress printing ink according to claim 21, wherein said ink comprises at least 25 % by weight of colorant.
25. (New) Process of direct cigarette printing, comprising the step of applying a letterpress printing ink according to claim 21 directly to cigarette paper.